

# KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

## YO! PROGRAM

2000-2001 Grant Amount: **\$4 Million**

## FULL EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL (FEC)

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### Mission and Vision

To develop an integrated delivery system for In-School Youth ages 14-18 and Out-of-School Youth ages 16-21, that results in academic and employment success. Success is measured by WIA and Youth Opportunity Grant performance standards required by the U.S. Dept of Labor, and additional community standards which may further measure service delivery and the quantity/quality value of the 15 youth development activities. *Vision* To increase the long-term employment of youth who live in Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities, and high-poverty areas. To achieve these goals, a large amount of resources are concentrated in high-poverty areas to bring about community-wide impacts on: employment rates, high school completion rates and college enrollment rates.

### Program Overview

Program goals are to provide comprehensive pre-placement and youth development activities to increase the placement of youth in long-term employment; significantly reduce the secondary school dropout rate; and to increase post-secondary, advanced training, apprenticeship and other placement opportunities available to youth. Job search, job development, and placement assistance is provided through the One Stop Career Center operated by the FEC. Support and follow-up services will be provided for 24 months to ensure performance goals are met and exceeded. A Program Advisory Council comprised of the YO! service providers, other youth service providers and an employer Career Achievement Committee have been established to ensure continuous improvement and sustainability.

### Highlights and Innovative Practices

- ! The YO! Center is adjacent to a community center and playing fields operated by the Parks and Recreation Department and the One Stop Center. The City donated \$90,000 towards the renovation of the YO! Center.
- ! A YO! rally was conducted by the YO! partners and youth. Congresswoman McCarthy, City Council members and the Mayor pro-tem participated.
- ! Job Corps youth donated their labor to renovate the YO! Center. It is scheduled to open July 1, 2001.
- ! The City of Kansas City, MO Neighborhood and Community Services Department has matched YO! training funds for the provision of arts-related internships for youth.
- ! Over 600 Youth have been enrolled in the YO! Program; all youth have access to 100 mentors and tutors.
- ! The Police Athletic League has formed a basketball league and a drum corps for YO! youth.
- ! Dropout diversion strategies have been developed by the Kansas City School District. Several YO! students who attend a newly developed alternative education site will receive high school diplomas.

### Key Partners

- ! *Alta Vista Charter School* provides reading and math remediation and GED preparation.
- ! *Learning Exchange*, a School-to-Work initiative, provides access to an Internet database (Pathfinders) for input of job information, resume development, and job search by youth.
- ! *City of Kansas City, Missouri* provides art-based internships and recreational activities.
- ! *Mattie Rhodes Counseling Center* offers individual and group counseling as well as access to a nurse.
- ! *YMCA* operates a GED program for out-of-school youth and community service projects.

### Youth Success Story

Frank is a 21 year old that is legally blind. When he enrolled into the Youth Opportunity Program he was a high school drop out with limited job experience and in and out of jobs. At the time he was unsure of his future and was dealing with the death of his Grandfather. Through the YO! Program we have been able to help Frank enroll into a GED program and begin working toward his GED. We located the proper materials for him to use to be successful in the classroom. He had been out of school for a while and was worried about his pre-test scores. With encouragement, he completed the test and scored well. His whole attitude has changed. He appears more confident and goal oriented. He is very determined to complete his GED and is considering furthering his education on a higher level after obtaining his GED.

